

[Mrs. Sarah Reddick]

[IN?] [?] DUP

FORM A Circumstances of Interview

NAME OF WORKER Harold J. Moss ADDRESS 6934 Francis St.

DATE December 21, 1938 SUBJECT American Folklore stuff

1. Name and address of informant Mrs. Sarah [?] Reddick, 6942 Lexington.
2. Date and time of interview Dec. 21, '38 - 9 to 11:30 a.m.
3. Place of interview Home of informant
4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant Anna [Rye Hoss?], 6934 Francis St., Lincoln, Nebr.
5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you
Anna [Rye?] Moss, 6934 Francis St., Lincoln, Nebr.
6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc.

Living room, finely furnished and with flowers and potted plants. House modern, atmosphered modern. Beautiful home of the better class in fine neighborhood, just north-east of the old Bethany ([?]) College in Bethany, extreme north-east Lincoln. C. 15 Neb.

FORM B Personal History of Informant

NAME OF WORKER Harold J. Moss ADDRESS 8934 Francis St., Lincoln

Library of Congress

DATE December 21, 1938 SUBJECT American Folklore stuff

NAME AND ADDRESS OF INFORMANT Mrs. Sarah M. Reddick, 6842 Lexington

1. Ancestry English-German

2. Place and date of birth Monterey, Ia., May 31, 1854 Father, Mr. Kelly born [Mo.?] 1798

3. Family Step-children only. Mother, Sarah Decker born Ken. 1817

4. Places lived with dates Monterey, Ia. 1854 - 1857* Valparaiso, Nebr. Savannah, Ia. 1857- 1873* 1882 - 1890 Cerosco, Nebr. 1873 - 1877* Uni. Place, 1890 - 1904 [Wahoo?], Nebr. 1877 - 1882* * Bethany, 1904 -to date

5. Education, with dates

Country school, Savannah, Ia. - 1861 to 1870

6. Occupations and accomplishments, with dates Homework, farm field work, nursing 1870 to 1890. Homework, nursing, care of sick 1890 to date.

7. Special skills and interests

Cooking, care of sick, knitting, quilt making.

8. Community and religious activities

Care of sick, nursing, without pay, neighborly assistance. Presbyterian church, Christian church, church work.

9. Description of informant

Vigorous, alert, keen minded, excellent physical condition, interested in people about her.

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10. Other points gained in interview

Fine appearance, charming personality, seems [20?] years younger than her age. Fine features, pure American type. Medium height, robust, buoyant disposition. Memory unusually good. Mrs. Reddick has seen much of life and worked hard. Has extended much in way of services and aid to others and without pay.

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FORM C Text of Interview (Unedited)

Early

Days

In Iowa

We did not have, of course, the many fine comforts of living such as you see today, in our early life.

How would you like to read and work today by a light, which was a dish filled with grease with braided rags for a wick?

By the

Light of

The Candle

Later, mother got hold of a candle mold and then we thought we had the finest light that could be had. And then the coal oil lamp came. It was looked upon as a miracle.

Country School

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Ghost Stories

Country school near Savannah, Iowa was the only schooling I had. There were no desks, and we sat on benches placed against the wall. Spelling was the most thought of and came ahead of reading. Ghost stories were often told and many accounts of spiritual happenings, which were scary and strange. I was always uneasy and frightened by the telling of these. Whole communities dished out [these?] stories and believed them or part of them.

Today

They still

Believe in Spirits

My sister, who lives here right now believes in those old foggy tales of strange spirits and [their doings?]. She and a number of others here have joined in a group and they claim to be able to visit with the departed whenever they wish. She tells of visiting with our mother [many?] times.

Silly Business

It's a silly business to me and when very small I recall a woman who took to yelling and shouting and even rolling on the floor during meetings at our church, the Presbyterian church. Revivals

She always make a [big?] ado at revivals and a few others were showing signs of doing the same thing to attract attention to themselves.

Being only a child, I thought it was funny and at home, I did a pretty good job of [mocking?] and imitating this woman.

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Somehow she heard of it and quit such carryin' ons'.

Then and now I think that a lot of this business was put on for effect.

Woman who

Pray for Everything

There is a woman not far from where we are now, who prays for hours. If she wants a new dress or something for her house she prays for it. Right now she is praying for a bathtub.

I think there is a clique club of them who are trying to get material things by this means. I don't think for a minute that one can get these things like that.

Early

Nebraska Life

When we first moved to Nebraska we came thru Lincoln. It was about like Bethany is now. We stopped on the salt flats for camp but the water was so salty even the coffee was spoiled. Near [Corosco?] we lived in a dugout with a shingle roof. It was not very nice but we got along fine. Visions

The Bean Patch

Here I remember a thing, which I found out later quite a group of people around there, were interested in. I went to this place on Rock Creek one day to pick gooseberries and the woman's husband helped me across the creek. This woman had a bean patch near the house. When I came back from picking gooseberries [and?] reached the house, she came [to?] the door and said, "Why did you [hoe?] down my bean patch? I know you did because I saw you in the vision and watched you do it." I hadn't been near the bean patch

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but that made no difference [to?] her. She said the deed was done [altho?] the bean patch showed no sign of it.

Some others around there also claimed [were?] able to see things without looking at them, and that what they saw was going to happen as they saw it.

Healed by Scripture

My sister's last husband said he could always stop nose bleed by quoting a passage of scripture.

Blessing

the Handkerchief

A new kind of dealer hand some dealings with people of our community 3 here in Nebraska.

If you would give or send him one of your handkerchiefs, any one would do, he would bless it in some way and return it to you. You would then be cured of all your ailments. A number of people had faith in this funny business and gave him a chance to prove it. Some of them even said it worked.

Some of these people were supposed to be fairly smart too.

I think the idea ridiculous.

Worthwhile care of the Sick

One of my best pleasures was nursing and taking care of sick people. I enjoyed it and never asked for pay. It was at times trying work as a lot of folks had so many fears and superstitions about sickness and death. They would declare that the sick one was going to

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die because a dog had howled, or the wind wailed or a hoot owl hooted or they dreamed of a corpse and so on.

Signs of Death Impending

These people actually took on like they were looking for death to come and could not shift their way of thinking to a more cheerful faith.

Some did die, and I then helped out in place of an undertaker. There were no undertakers anyway. Neighbors gathered in and make the coffin.

I have seen them take a tub, filled with ice and set it under the corpse in hot weather. Many times I have wet a cloth over and over in saltpeter and water and laid it over the face of the corpse to keep it from discoloring. The casket was lowered into the grave by hand, using lines from one of the team's harness. The people all remained in the cemetery until the grave was filled in.

A Railroad Here

One time, on the Northwestern Railroad at [Cerosco?], a fireman on one of the engines crawled along the boiler down to the cowcatcher and grabbed up a little girl by the name of Moyer. The train was entering the town of 4 and could not stop in time. The girl's life was saved by this brave [sot?]. I do not know the name of the man who did this but it was a man working on the engine.

Tormenting Pests

In the early days we were tormented by insects, mostly fleas and all kinds of bugs and head lice.

They don't seem to bother anymore. People were a little superstitious of coal oil as a treatment.

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Afraid of Coal Oil Lamps

This was in the time just after coal oil lamps came in and lots of the folks were afraid to use them because they would burn you up or at least they thought so. Coal oil was an evil thing to them.

Snake Bite

My brother was bitten by a rattlesnake here in Nebraska and every year after that on the date he was bitten, his leg would swell and turn blue. Others said this happened to every one who was bitten. Lots of evil things were blamed on snakes.

A Bride

& Groom Hoax

When I was a girl, the men used to play a joke on all newcomers in the neighborhood. no man would dress up as a girl and then the couple, both men, but one dressed as a girl, would ride out to the newcomer's house and call him out and ask him to get a minister, as they wanted to get married.

The new neighbor would usually hustle around and get his horse out to take them to the minister.

After a while they would have a good laugh and tell him it was just a joke.

The Water Stick

There were in the earlier days some men who went around and offered to locate water with a forked stick so that one could dig a well in the right place. They said that then they came over the place where water was the stick would turn and twist. They did locate some wells but I never saw 5 the stick act up like they said. The Healer

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Some years ago a man who called himself a divine Healer came here to Bethany park. He said he could heal all ailments and cure the lame, and the blind and at the same time take away their sins.

He would his hands on their heads and they would fall over and lay quiet. Some said they had been cured but I guess they were those people who think they are sick all the time, but who are really in good health except for their way of thinking.

A good many went to this man. I still think there is nothing to this healing business except where it was just in their head. It is strange how many people believe in foolish things like this.

I liked the early days even though living was not so easy and think that Nebraska had a good class of people come to the state in the earlier days and that they were not made up so much of narrow, self-centered groups .

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FORM D

(Supplementary)

Mrs. Reddick is a real Nebraska citizen with an interesting pioneer background. When Ollie Magee, founder of Magee's store in Lincoln, and his four brothers and sisters were sick with diptheria, Mrs. Reddick was the only one who would go and help care for them. She would have liked to have been a nurse, all the time.

The various healers mentioned in her stories are no doubt still carrying on in some form or another.

As long as there are gullible people, there will be enterprising [schemers?] to take advantage, no matter how fantastic the method of operation.

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Probably the few cures reported are not cures at all but just hyperchondriacs who have come to their senses.

Or else they are aroused so emotionally that they draw on their residuum of strength for a brief period of relief from their bodily defects, followed later by a relapse or severe let down.